

WONDER

what to do with fluorescent bulbs and tubes?



Recycle Them With a State-Approved Recycler

The State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has classified all discarded fluorescent lamps as hazardous waste, making it illegal to improperly dispose of fluorescent lamps. A fluorescent lamp in your dumpster may be a violation of the hazardous waste laws that can result in large fines and criminal prosecution. You are now required to separate lamps from your garbage and send them to a state approved recycler.

For more information, visit
www.cityofpaloalto.org/hazwaste
zerowaste@cityofpaloalto.org
(650) 496-5910



Why Fluorescent Lamps Are Not Allowed In The Garbage

Fluorescent lamps, including light tubes and bulbs, high-intensity discharge (HID), metal halide, sodium and neon bulbs all contain mercury particles and vapors. Mercury is a known neurotoxin and bioaccumulative substance. Human exposure to high levels of mercury can permanently damage the brain, kidneys, and developing fetuses. Improper disposal of fluorescent lamps can lead to groundwater contamination, as well as contaminate the air we breathe, enter streams, rivers, and the ocean, where it can contaminate fish that people eat. In addition, by throwing fluorescent lamps in the garbage you can cause additional hazards to your garbage handlers.

What Do The Regulations Allow?

Spent fluorescent lamps should be managed as “universal wastes” and must be recycled, not disposed by an authorized recycler.

Businesses are also allowed to:

1. Accumulate spent lamps for up to one year before sending them to a recycling firm;
2. Transport spent lamps to a recycler without using a hazardous waste hauler or a hazardous waste manifest. Regulations require businesses to keep some form of documentation (e.g., bill of lading) to demonstrate the lamps were recycled properly.

Recyclers

Businesses and non-profit organizations can call the following list* of fluorescent lamp recyclers listed below. There are drop-off, pick-up and mail options.

- AERC, (510) 429-1129
- Veolia Environmental Services, (800) 368-9095
- Air Cycle Corporation (EasyPak), (888) 640-6700
- Recycle Lights West, (800) 884-8982
- North State Environmental, (650) 588-2838
- Clean Harbors (via Palo Alto’s Business Hazardous Waste Program) (800) 433-5060

* Business listings should not be construed as an endorsement by the City of Palo Alto.